

The Present Truth, vol. 3

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1887

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“COMFORT ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.” This is the word of the Lord by the prophet Isaiah. The Lord knows our trials, our afflictions, our troubles, and in his great pity sends comfort. “Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.” *Job 5:6, 7*. Trouble is the common lot of all men. Who in this world is free from it? None. And the Lord, knowing our frame, remembering that we are dust, says, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people.” *PTUK August 18, 1887, page 245.1*

Paul, in contemplating this, exclaims, “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of *all comfort*; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” *2 Corinthians 1:3, 4*. The Bible is a perfect storehouse of all the needs of human experience, and trouble is as universal as is the human race. “Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.” *Job 5:6, 7*. Solomon, in considering the oppressions that are done under the sun, said: “Behold, the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter.” *Ecclesiastes 4:1*. It is had enough to be oppressed, but to be oppressed and have no comforter is terrible. It is true that there are many such, but it is equally true that there *need* not be any such; for all that are oppressed, all that are afflicted, all that are troubled, may do as one of old, “I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause,” and he, “the God of all comfort,” will “comfort all that mourn.” His tender mercies are over all his works. *PTUK August 18, 1887, page 245.2*

It is a fact that the Lord has not, in his word, told us to do anything without telling us how to do that thing. It is so in this. He has not only told us, "Comfort ye my people," but he tells us how to comfort them. We will notice an example or two.*PTUK August 18, 1887, page 245.3*

In *John 13 to 18* we have Jesus' last talk to his disciples before his crucifixion. He was about to leave them to go again to his Father, and in *John 13:33* he said: "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you." This is a very important statement, "Whither I go ye cannot come." But not only that, the Lord refers us to something else, "As I said unto the Jews, ... so now I say to you." Therefore to obtain the full meaning of this word, whither I go ye cannot come, we must find what it was he had said to the Jews. The only place in which he spoke these words to the Jews is *John 8:21*: "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins; whither I go, ye cannot come." This it is to which he referred in *John 13:33*. "As I said unto the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come; so now I say to you." Therefore, so far as going to the Lord is concerned, it is positive by his own words, that his disciples have no pre-eminence above men who die in their sins.*PTUK August 18, 1887, page 245.4*

When Jesus said this to his disciples, they were troubled. Could it be possible that they who had left all and had followed him; that these whom he had chosen out of the world; that these whom he had loved unto the end; could it be possible that they, after all their experience with him and his love for them, should now be left on the level of those who die in their sins? Why should they not be troubled? He had asked them once, "Will ye also go away?" and Peter had replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go" thou hast the words of eternal life;" and now after having trusted in him for eternal life, to be told that when he should go away, they could not go where he went, that was enough to trouble them.*PTUK August 18, 1887, page 245.5*

But Jesus did not allow them to be long troubled thus. He comforts them. He said: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it

were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And *if I go* and prepare a place for you, *I will come again, and receive you* unto myself; *that* where I am, there ye may be also.” *John 14:1-3*. This relieved them of all their trouble on that point, this was comfort indeed. And, mark you, it is the Lord’s own word. It is Christ’s own message of comfort to his disciples. And that message of comfort is, although it be that “whither I go, *ye cannot come*,” any more than can men who die in their sins, yet, “*I will come again* and receive you unto myself; *that* where I am there ye may be also.” And this word “that” shows that it is only by his coming again that his children can ever be where he is. *PTUK August 18, 1887, page 245.6*

Now why should the Saviour, who loved his disciples so tenderly, stir up this trouble in their hearts? They were with him when he told the Jews, “Ye shall die in your sins, and whither I go ye cannot come.” They understood the full force of that fearful sentence. Now why should he plunge them into fear and trouble, by saying the same thing to them, and this too, by the phrase, “As I said unto the Jews,” so emphatically that they could not possibly misunderstand him? Why was this done? The sequel shows plainly that it was for the purpose of making such an impression upon the as they never could forget; and so to fix ineffaceably upon their minds the truth that without his coming again, there is absolutely no hope of ever being where he is; and thus to set them in view of one event as the consummation of all their hopes, and that event the *coming again* of the Lord. That is the comfort of Christ himself. *PTUK August 18, 1887, page 245.7*

Another instance: The Thessalonian brethren were sorrowing because some of their number had died. And now the Lord, by Paul’s pen, sends them comfort. And what is his comfort? The same Jesus gave to his disciples, for it is Jesus who sends this. Here is it: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore *comfort one another with these words.*” *1 Thessalonians 4:16-18*. That is the comfort the Lord gives to the sorrowing. And any other

under such circumstances is false comfort. It is not only his comfort to us, but it is *his command* that we comfort one another *with these words*.*PTUK August 18, 1887, page 245.8*

Once more: In *2 Thessalonians 1:6-10* Paul speaks to those “who are troubled,” and his comfort is that “the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven ... when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe ... in that day.” This is the comfort of God: The Lord is coming. “I will come again.” “The Lord himself shall descend from Heaven.” “The Lord shall be revealed from Heaven.” “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.”*PTUK August 18, 1887, page 245.9*

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